

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 00873 171730Z

72

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

MC-02 EB-11 IGA-02 AID-20 COME-00 TRSE-00 INT-08

FEA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15

PRS-01 DRC-01 /155 W

----- 002794

R 171724Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9785

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 00873

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MASS, IR

SUBJECT: REUTERS PRESS REPORT RE LEOPARD TANKS

REF: STATE 7570

1. A KNOWLEDGEABLE MOD SOURCE TOLD US JAN 15 THAT THERE WAS NO TRUTH TO THE REUTERS REPORT THAT MOD STATE SECRETARY WAS IN IRAN TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE DELIVERY OF LEOPARD TANKS IN RETURN FOR OIL. HE SAID THAT CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO SENDING AN FRG ARMS ADVISORY TEAM AND THAT HE WOULD TRY TO FILL US IN WITH DETAILS WHEN THEY BECAME AVAILABLE TO HIM. WE EARLIER LEARNED FROM A LOCAL DEFENSE PUBLICATION THAT RETIRED ARMY BRIG. GEN. BENSIEN, A FORMER MOD ARMAMENT OFFICIAL WHO DEALT WITH FMS, WOULD HEAD THE TEAM WHOSE BROAD AIM WOULD BE TO IMPROVE IRAN'S MILITARY INDUSTRY. ACCORDING TO THE IRANIAN MILITARY ATTACHE HERE, THE IRANIANS HAVE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN ADAPTING THE LEOPARD II TANK ENGINE TO OLDER TANKS IN THEIR INVENTORY. WE EXPECT TO SEE MANN IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND WILL ASK HIM ABOUT THE ADVISORY TEAM.

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PAGE 02 BONN 00873 171730Z

2. WE NOTED IN RECENT PRESS REPORTS THAT GOVERNMENT

SPOKESMEN HAVE DENIED ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN FRG-IRANIAN CONTACTS ON ARMS MATTERS AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR GERMAN FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL AID TO BUILD IRANIAN OIL REFINERIES. THE NEUE ZUERCHER ZEITUNG REPORTED JAN. 14 THAT THE FRG DID NOT WANT TO BE SUSPECTED OF ENGAGING IN ARMS TRADE-OFFS FOR IRANIAN OIL. OFFICIAL CIRCLES DO NOT, HOWEVER, DENY THAT AGREEMENTS COULD BE ARRANGED BETWEEN GERMAN ARMAMENT FIRMS AND THE IRANIAN MILITARY INDUSTRY ON JOINT PROJECTS, AID FOR DOMESTIC ARMS PRODUCTION OR DIRECT DELIVERIES. THE NZZ ALSO SAID THAT PRIVATE AGREEMENTS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO CURRENT FRG APPROVAL OR AUTHORIZATION PROCEDURES, BUT THAT THE EMBARGO FOR ARMS DELIVERIES TO CONFLICT AREAS WOULD NOT APPLY TO IRAN.

3. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO NOTE THAT WE LACK A BASIS

FOR JUDGING WHETHER FRG EFFORTS WILL COMPLEMENT OR CONFLICT WITH OURS.

HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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